

Message Text

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R 120830Z MAR 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9917

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2761

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: CHIANG CHING AND ATTACK ON SHANSI OPERA

REF: HONG KONG 2384

SUMMARY. PEOPLE'S DAILY HAS BROUGHT UP CHIANG CHING'S NAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONTINUING ATTACKS ON A REVISIONIST SHANSI OPERA. CENTRAL AUTHORITIES IN CULTURAL AFFAIRS MAY BE UNDER PRESSURE TO EXPLAIN THE OPERA'S PERFORMANCE IN PEKING. END SUMMARY.

1. WE NOTE AN AFP REPORT FROM PEKING THAT THE PEOPLE'S DAILY MARCH 11 CARRIED YET ANOTHER PAGE OF ARTICLES ATTACKING THE SHANSI OPERA "THREE VISITS TO TAOFENG" AND THAT CHIANG CHING IS MENTIONED BY NAME. ACCORDING TO AFP'S ACCOUNT OF THE ARTICLES THE PERPETRATORS OF THE SHANSI OPERA SOUGHT TO GO AGAINST "THE RULES" OF HER MODEL THEATRICAL WORKS AND TO GIVE "THE GREEN LIGHT TO CAPITALIST RESTORATION." THE PASSAGE THAT REFERS TO HER REPORTEDLY DESCRIBES THE REVOLUTIONARY THEATER AS THE "METICULOUS

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AND RELENTLESS WORK OF COMRADE CHIANG CHING."

2. IF THE REPORT IS ACCURATE, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT CHIANG CHING'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE ATTACK ON THE SHANSI OPERA HAS BEEN SO CLEARLY SET FORTH IN NATIONAL-LEVEL MEDIA. SHE WAS SO IDENTIFIED EARLIER IN RADIO BROADCASTS FROM TWO PROVINCES. ROUGHLY HALF OF THE PROVINCIAL STATIONS HAVE NOW JOINED IN THE ATTACK, BUT THEY GENERALLY HAVE TREATED THE SHANSI OPERA AS AN AFFRONT OR CHALLENGE TO THE MODEL THEATRICAL WORKS WITHOUT MENTIONING CHIANG CHING'S NAME.

3. THE LAST PREVIOUS SALLY ON THE SUBJECT BY PEOPLE'S DAILY, A FULL PAGE IN THE MARCH 7 ISSUE, HAS JUST BEEN RECEIVED HERE. THE ARTICLES APPEAR TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE CULTURAL GROUP OF THE STATE COUNCIL TO EXPLAIN ITSELF IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SHANSI OPERA AT THE NORTH CHINA THEATRICAL FESTIVAL UNDER ITS SPONSORSHIP. ONE ARTICLE NOTES THAT THE OPERA WAS PERFORMED AND CRITICIZED AT LOWER LEVELS EARLIER BUT THAT ITS SPONSORS HAD "SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE NORTH CHINA THEATRICAL FESTIVAL TO PUT THIS REACTIONARY OPERA OPENLY ON THE STAGE IN THE CAPITAL." ANOTHER ARTICLE ASSERTS THAT PIERCING THE OPERA'S DISGUISE "IT IS...POSSIBLE...TO SEIZE THE BLACK HAND THAT IS DESPERATELY TRYING TO BRING LIU SHAO-CHI BACK TO LIFE...."

4. IN ADDITION TO SHANSI, WE HAVE NOTED THREE OTHER PROVINCES WHICH STATE THAT "THREE VISITS TO TAOFENG" HAD BEEN PERFORMED FOR LOCAL AUDIENCE EARLIER (HONAN, KANSU, INNER MONGOLIA). IF THAT IS SO--AND THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE WHICH IS BEING MADE-- THEN THE OPERA SHOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR TO THE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES WHO ORGANIZED THE FESTIVAL, AND COULD HARDLY HAVE SLIPPED BY THEM WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE CAPITAL.
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